

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Schools and Childcare Facilities

This document provides guidance for COVID-19 prevention in DC Schools and Childcare Facilities. For additional information, including current District COVID-19-related public health data, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

PREVENTION OF COVID-19

COVID-19 prevention strategies for Schools and Childcare Facilities are divided into 2 categories: Everyday prevention measures that should be kept in place during all COVID-19 Community Levels¹ (including **Low**), and enhanced prevention measures that can be implemented during **Medium** or **High** COVID-19 Community Levels OR in response to facility and student-specific needs (e.g. during a facility outbreak or to maintain a safe in-person learning environment for disabled or immunocompromised students). These are summarized below for easy reference. For full details, see *Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Educational Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning* at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html.

- **Everyday prevention measures (regardless of COVID-19 Community Level):**
 - COVID-19 vaccination
 - Staying home when sick
 - Isolation (for symptomatic or COVID-19 positive people)
 - Schools and childcare facilities must remove and exclude individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms of COVID-19 pursuant to 22B DCMR §§ 209.1 — 209.8 for schools and 5A DCMR §§ 151.1 – 151.8, 162.4 and 118.4 for childcare facilities.
 - Precautions² (for people exposed to COVID-19)
 - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
 - Optimizing indoor ventilation and air quality
 - Cleaning and disinfection

- **Enhanced prevention measures for High COVID-19 Community Levels (or facility-specific needs):**
 - Masks/respirators
 - Avoiding crowding in the facility
 - **Consider** COVID-19 screening testing for students and staff (vaccinated or unvaccinated) for high-risk activities (e.g., close contact sports, band, choir, theater); at key times in the year such as before/after large events (e.g., prom, tournaments, group travel); and when returning from breaks (e.g., holidays, spring break, at the beginning of the school year).
 - Prioritizing outdoor activities

- **Regardless of COVID-19 community level, encourage everyone to respect the choice of others who wish to wear a mask.**

¹ **COVID-19 Community Levels** are a CDC tool to help communities and individuals decide what prevention steps to take based on the COVID-19 level in their area. There are 3 levels: **Low**, **Medium**, and **High**. To look up current COVID-19 Community Levels for DC and other areas of the U.S., see cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html.

² For more information on precautions after exposure, see *Guidance After Exposure to a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions, Quarantine and Testing* available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance

ADDITIONAL FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Exposure identification and communication**
 - Facilities should have a process in place to notify individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the facility (e.g., a letter, an email, a phone call) to inform them to monitor for symptoms.
 - Schools and childcare facilities should share the following with potentially exposed staff and parents/guardians of potentially exposed students:
 - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - Referral to *Guidance After Exposure to a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions, Quarantine and Testing*, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance
 - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.
 - The privacy of the staff or student must be maintained.

- **Reporting:**
 - Schools and childcare facilities **must** notify DC Health if:
 - They have 25 or more confirmed COVID-19 cases tied to a single event that occurred at or was hosted/sponsored by the facility.
 - Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website: dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements.
 - ❖ Submit a Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form at dccovid.force.com/NonHealthcareConsultRequestForm/s/
 - ❖ DC Health must be notified on the same day the outbreak was reported to the facility, as soon as possible after the facility was notified.
 - Note: Childcare facilities licensed by OSSE must report any instance of communicable disease, including COVID-19, to OSSE by submitting an unusual incident report, as required by OSSE licensing regulations.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the District's pandemic response evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.